

HOUSING FUTURES

Volume 1, Issue 3— August 2011



CO-OPERATIVE DEMOCRACY



On the 25 July 2011 co-operative democracy flourished at the Dandenong Club with a general meeting of members of the South East Housing Co-operative Ltd.

There were x members at the meeting chaired by Shirley Faram.

"It was a great meeting," said Shirley, "It was constructive, positive and business-like and I congratulate all members present for their contribution."

Shirley said that 2012 was the international Year of Co-operatives and provided an opportunity for all co-operatives, including SEHC, to renew their commitment to co-operative democracy."

A co-operative is its members and general meetings are fundamental to democracy in a co-operative. It is through general meetings that the board is accountable to members for what it has done—and not done.

The general meeting included a number of important matters for members to consider:

A 2011 Lease developed by a Lease Sub Committee and approved by the board.

A new policy on any proposed future changes to leases.

The establishment of a member Working Party.

A Complaints Policy.

An amendment to the Member Manual that requires the co-operative to repair and replace, if necessary, items such as air conditioners and dishwashers.





Shirley Faram,
Chairperson, at the
general meeting on
25 July 2011.

GENERAL MEETING DECISIONS

PRIVACY

SEHC is committed to protecting your privacy and complying with all applicable privacy laws. If you have any questions or comments about our privacy practices, we can be contacted at PO Box 7141, Dandenong, 3175. 03 9706 8005. Fax 03 9706

2011 Lease

The meeting adopted the 2011 Lease developed by the Lease Sub-Committee. The lease has been referred to DHS for comment. It is hoped that SEHC will be able to offer the new lease shortly.

Complaints Policy

A complaints policy was adopted. It was the failure to deal with complaints that lead to the intervention by the Housing Registrar. The actual policy has not been the problem. It was not being implemented. Given the importance of complaints, the board decided that the policy should be subject to a member vote.

Future Lease Changes

Members were not con-

sulted about the 2010 Lease and the meeting decided that any future proposed changes to the lease should require a consultation with members.

Member Working Party

A member Working Party was established at the general meeting to consider two important issues—a member newsletter and the organization of Member Forums. A number of members volunteered to join the Working Party. The Working Party will be resourced by the General Manager.

“Non-Standard Items”

Accepting a recommendation from the board, the general meeting overturned a previous policy not to repair or replace so-called

non-standard items such as air conditioners and dishwashers.

The Residential Tenancies Act does not recognize “non-standard” items.

If a tenant moves into a property with a “non-standard” item, then, SEHC is responsible for repair and replacement.

The General Manager, Ian McLaren, is attempting to ascertain how many of these “non-standard” items are in properties to establish a repair and replace cost that was not previously costed.

The general meeting decisions with appropriate documentation have been uploaded to the SEHC web site.

MEMBERS AT THE GENERAL MEETING



Co-operatives are enterprises that put people at the centre of their business and not capital. Co-operatives are business enterprises and thus can be defined in terms of three basic interests: ownership, control, and beneficiary. Only in the co-operative enterprise are all three interests vested directly in the hands of the user.

HOUSING BRIEFS

Annual General Meeting

7.00—9.00

PM

21 November
2011

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Services Charter

The board's Governance and policy Committee has completed a review of the Services Charter.

The Committee believes that its review will result in a Services Charter that is member friendly.

Rule Changes

The Governance and Policy Committee is recommending to the board a series of changes to the Rules. Most of the proposed changes remove redundant provisions. Others clarify the meaning of various Rules.

Board agreed changes will, then, be referred to Consumer Affairs Victoria and the Housing Registrar for approval. Once the changes are approved they will be submitted to the AGM on 21 November 2011.

Board Public Record

At its meeting on 29 July 2011 the board approved the release of its first public record of its the previous board meeting on 24 June 2011. The public record has been uploaded to the SEHC web site. Members can request a hard or email copy by telephoning or emailing the SEHC Office.

Complaints Brochure

Following the adoption of the Complaints Policy at the general meeting on 25 July 2011, a complaints brochure is being prepared to advise members of the policy and procedures.

Classified Ads

From the next issue Housing Futures will publish classified ads submitted by members.

Classified ads will have a maximum of 350 words.

SEHC will not knowingly accept any ads which may be in breach of the Competition & Consumer Act 2010 or any other relevant law.

Depending on member response to classified ads, consideration will be given to uploading ads to the SEHC web site.

Annual Report

Work is proceeding on this year's Annual Report. The theme of the report will be Beyond 2012. The report will also feature organizational performance indicators

National Co-operative Housing Conference

As part of the International Year of Co-operatives in 2012, Common Equity Housing Ltd (CEHL) is organizing a national co-operative housing conference.

International Year of Co-operatives

The United Nations proclaimed 2012 as the International Year of Co-operatives (IYC) in December 2009.

An Australia IYC Steering Committee has been established. The IYC National Steering Committee was formed in May 2010.

More Information

International Co-operative Alliance <http://www.ica.coop/activities/iyf/index.html>

Social Business Australia <http://www.socialbusiness.coop/international-year-of-cooperatives/>

Member Satisfaction Survey

The responses to the survey were excellent with most members taking the opportunity to offer additional comments—an effort that is much appreciated.

The response rate, however, was disappointing—17.5%. This is well below previous response rates of about 25%.

Member suggestions on how we could improve the response rate to member surveys would be most welcome.

Make a Suggestion

We would welcome suggestions for what you would like to see in future editions of the newsletter.

We would also welcome written contributions.